

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (New) A method for preserving and/or storing microorganisms which exhibit at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, with the preservation and/or storage being effected in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, with the total aldehyde concentration being in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l.

15. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is described by the formula III

$R^6-C=O$  (III)

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where  $R^6$  can be substituted or unsubstituted, branched or unbranched, C1-C10-alkyl or C2-C10-alkenyl or substituted or unsubstituted aryl or hetaryl.

16. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the preservation step is carried out before the cells are treated with a reactant whose reaction is to be catalyzed by the cells.

17. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the aqueous medium comprises a total concentration of cyanide compounds, selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, which is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration or wherein the aqueous medium does not comprise any additions of said cyanide compounds.

18. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is selected from the group comprising unsubstituted benzaldehyde and substituted benzaldehydes.

19. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the species of the Enterobacteriaceae or Nocardiaceae family.

20. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group of the species *Pseudomonas*, *Burkholderia*, *Nocardia*, *Acetobacter*, *Gluconobacter*,

Corynebacterium, Brevibacterium, Bacillus, Clostridium, Cyanobacter, Staphylococcus, Aerobacter, Alcaligenes, Rhodococcus and Penicillium.

21. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the method is combined with at least one further method for stabilizing, preserving and/or storing enzymes, with said methods being selected from the group consisting of:

- a) adding at least one inorganic salt at a concentration of at least 100 mM;
- b) adding metal salts whose metal cation functions as a nitrilase prosthetic group;
- c) adding nitriles and/or amides.

22. (New) A preparation for preserving and/or storing microorganisms which exhibit at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, with the preparation comprising

- a) at least one aldehyde having a total aldehyde concentration in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l, and
- b) cyanide compounds, selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, at a total concentration which is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration.

23. (New) A preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22, wherein said preparation does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds.

24. (New) A foodstuff, feedstuff, pharmaceutical or fine chemical produced from preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22.

25. (New) A method for preparing recombinant proteins, enzymes or fine chemicals using a preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22 or a preparation thereof.

26. (New) A method for preparing carboxylic acids and/or amides, comprising the following steps:

- a) culturing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity,

- b) adding at least one aldehyde, with the total aldehyde concentration being in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l and storing at 0°C to 20°C until being used in step (c),
- c) bringing the aldehyde-treated preparation of said microorganisms into contact with at least one nitrile and converting said nitrile into a carboxylic acid and/or an amide.